

6840 (932) P

Memorandum

To: Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arizona Ecological Services Field Office, Phoenix, Arizona

From: Deputy State Director, Resources Division

Subject: Request for Formal Consultation and Conference Pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act and 50 CFR 402.14 for the BLM Arizona Statewide Land Use Plan Amendment and Environmental Assessment for Fire, Fuels, and Air Quality Management, Consultation Number 2-21-03-I-0210

In accordance with Section 7(a)2 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Arizona State Office, requests formal consultation and conference for the BLM Arizona Statewide Land Use Plan Amendment and Environmental Assessment for Fire, Fuels, and Air Quality Management, involving 28 threatened or endangered species, one proposed species, and designated or proposed critical habitats for ten species. We are seeking concurrences with determinations of “may affect, not likely to adversely affect” for 14 species, some with critical habitat. Additionally, we are seeking recommendations on five candidate species.

The proposed action is to amend BLM’s seven existing Land Use Plans (LUPs) to comply with current fire policy and guidance and to fully integrate fire and fuels management and direction found in the latest Department of Interior (DOI) and BLM resource program guidance for lands administered by BLM. The LUP Amendment would establish **Desired Future Conditions, Land Use Allocations, and Management Actions, including Conservation Measures**, and would amend existing LUP decisions concerning fire, fuels, and air quality management. The planning area for the proposed Statewide LUP amendment includes all BLM-administered public lands within the state of Arizona and those portions of California administered by the Yuma and Lake Havasu Field Offices.

We have analyzed the effects of the proposed action on endangered, threatened, proposed, and candidate species and critical habitats that are known, or their habitat is known, to occur in the vicinity of the project. It is our determination, documented in the attached Biological Evaluation, that this project may affect, and is likely to adversely affect, the following 28 Federally listed species: Chiricahua leopard frog, cactus ferruginous pygmy-owl, southwestern willow flycatcher, Yuma clapper rail, bald eagle, desert pupfish, Gila topminnow, razorback sucker, Virgin River chub, woundfin, Yaqui chub, Yaqui topminnow, Little Colorado spinedace, loach minnow, spinedace, Arizona cliffrose, Brady pincushion cactus, Holmgren milk vetch, Huachuca water umbel, Kearney’s blue-star, Nichol turk’s head cactus, Peebles Navajo cactus, Pima pineapple cactus, Jones cycladenia, Siler pincushion cactus, Hualapai Mexican vole, desert tortoise (Mojave population), and New Mexico ridge-nosed rattlesnake; as well as designated critical habitats for the razorback sucker, Virgin River chub, woundfin, Little Colorado River spinedace, loach minnow, spinedace, Huachuca water umbel, and desert tortoise (Mojave population). We request that the Service prepare a Biological Opinion for these 28 species and eight critical habitats.

Additionally, we have determined that the project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, the following 12 Federally listed species: California brown pelican, masked bobwhite, northern aplomado

falcon, Mexican spotted owl, bonytail chub, beautiful shiner, Yaqui catfish, black-footed ferret, jaguar, lesser long-nosed bat, ocelot, and Sonoran pronghorn; as well as designated critical habitats for the Mexican spotted owl, bonytail chub, Yaqui chub, beautiful shiner, and Yaqui catfish. We request your concurrence with our determinations for these 12 species and five designated critical habitats.

As you know, BLM policy in Manual Section 6840 requires us to confer on proposed species at the “may affect” level. We desire your concurrence with a finding of “may affect, not likely to adversely affect” for the 10(j) populations of Federally listed species (equivalent to “proposed” status) for the California condor and Mexican gray wolf.

We have determined that the proposed action may affect, and is likely to adversely affect, the proposed endangered Gila chub, its proposed critical habitat, and proposed critical habitat for the cactus ferruginous pygmy-owl. We request that the Service prepare a Conference Opinion for the Gila chub and these two proposed critical habitats, such that the Conference Opinion can be converted to a Biological Opinion should the species be listed or should critical habitat be designated later.

Finally, under the Memorandum of Agreement on Section 7 Programmatic Consultations (2000), we would like the Service’s recommendations based upon our determinations and effects analyses for the following five candidate species: relict leopard frog, yellow-billed cuckoo, Acuña cactus, Fickeisen plains cactus, and black-tailed prairie dog.

Please address your Biological and Conference Opinion to Elaine Y. Zielinski, State Director. Please contact Hilary Boyd at 435-688-3344 or Ted Cordery at 602-417-9242 if you have any additional questions or need additional information.

Michael A. Taylor

2 Attachments

- 1 - Biological Evaluation for the BLM Arizona Statewide Land Use Plan Amendment and EA for Fire, Fuels, and Air Quality Management (2 copies)
- 2 - Computer CD in Microsoft Word 2000 containing the BLM Arizona Statewide Land Use Plan Amendment and EA for Fire, Fuels, and Air Quality Management, the Biological Evaluation, and associated maps (2 CDs)

cc: Field Managers

Jim Melton, Project Manager, Dynamac Corporation, Idaho Falls, ID

Ron Lamb, Deputy PM, Dynamac Corporation, Germantown, MD

Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Southwest Regional Office, Albuquerque, NM